



Administrative Office of the Courts

100 Millcreek Park
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601-9230
p 502-573-2350 or 800-928-2350
www.kycourts.net

Joseph E. Lambert
Chief Justice

Melinda L. Wheeler
AOC Director

Contact: Leigh Anne Hiatt, APR, AOC public information officer
502-573-2350, cell 502-545-2839, lhiatt@kycourts.net

For Immediate Release

Judicial Branch budget authorizes 9 new judgeships Budget passed by 2006 General Assembly also provides funding for 8 judgeships approved by 2005 General Assembly

FRANKFORT, Ky., April 26, 2006 — House Bill 382, the 2006-2008 Judicial Branch budget bill passed by the 2006 General Assembly, has provided funding for eight Circuit Court judgeships authorized by the 2005 General Assembly and approved nine additional Circuit and District Court judgeships, Chief Justice Joseph E. Lambert announced today.

"Caseloads are very heavy in many jurisdictions across Kentucky," said Chief Justice Lambert. "With 17 additional judgeships, we will be able to alleviate some of the backlog and improve our ability to respond to citizens who are waiting for justice to be carried out by the courts. I appreciate the legislators who supported our request for new judgeships."

The General Assembly fixed Jan. 1, 2007, as the effective date for the nine new judgeships listed below. Chief Justice Lambert said that under the final version of the budget bill, candidates cannot run in the 2006 election for an office because it does not exist until Jan. 1. The following judgeships will be filled by appointment after Jan. 1.

Circuit Court Judgeships Authorized by 2006 General Assembly

Note: These seven judgeships have been approved for Circuit Court, but have not yet been designated for a certain division.

4th Judicial Circuit – Hopkins County

9th Judicial Circuit – Hardin County

14th Judicial Circuit – Bourbon, Scott and Woodford Counties

39th Judicial Circuit – Breathitt, Powell and Wolfe Counties

49th Judicial Circuit – Allen and Simpson Counties

54th Judicial Circuit – Boone and Gallatin Counties

57th Judicial Circuit – Russell and Wayne Counties

District Court Judgeships Authorized by 2006 General Assembly

8th Judicial District – Warren County

25th Judicial District – Clark and Madison Counties

-more-

Judicial Nominating Commission/Appointment Process

The Kentucky Constitution provides for a process to fill a judicial vacancy. When a vacancy occurs, the executive secretary of the Judicial Nominating Commission sends a notice of vacancy to all attorneys in the judicial circuit or the judicial district affected. Attorneys can recommend someone or nominate themselves.

Once that occurs, the individuals interested in the position return a questionnaire to the Office of Chief Justice. The Chief Justice of Kentucky then meets with the Judicial Nominating Commission to choose three nominees. Because the Kentucky Constitution requires that three names be submitted to the governor, in some cases the commission submits an attorney's name even though the attorney did not apply. This ensures there are always three nominees.

The names of the applicants are not released. However, once the Judicial Nominating Commission has determined the names of the three finalists to be sent to the Governor for selection, the Judicial Branch makes the names available to the public and the media. The credentials of these three nominees are sent to the Governor for review. When the governor appoints the replacement, his office makes the announcement.

Elected Positions

Chief Justice Lambert said that seven of the eight Circuit Court judgeships authorized in 2005 have been designated as Family Court Divisions of Circuit Court and have an effective date of July 15, 2006. Eligible candidates who want to file for these positions have until Aug. 8 to be included on the ballot for the November 2006 general election. Because these positions are effective July 15, these candidates will not be able to participate in the primary election. Therefore, the candidate receiving the most votes in the general election will win the seat and take office Jan. 2, 2007.

Circuit Court Judgeships Authorized by 2005 General Assembly

Note: These seven judgeships have been designated for the Family Court Division of Circuit Court.

13th Judicial Circuit – Garrard and Jessamine Counties

20th Judicial Circuit – Greenup and Lewis Counties

27th Judicial Circuit – Knox and Laurel Counties

38th Judicial Circuit – Butler, Edmonson, Hancock and Ohio Counties

42nd Judicial Circuit – Calloway and Marshall Counties

53rd Judicial Circuit – Anderson, Shelby and Spencer Counties

55th Judicial Circuit – Bullitt County

Circuit Court Judgeships Authorized by 2005 General Assembly

Note: This judgeship has been designed for the Criminal/Civil Division of Circuit Court.

10th Judicial Circuit – Hart, Larue and Nelson Counties

Circuit Court Criminal/Civil Division and Family Division

Circuit Court is the court of general jurisdiction and hears all criminal matters involving more than \$4,000. It has jurisdiction over capital offenses and felonies, dissolution of marriage, adoption, termination of parental rights, land disputes and contested probate cases. Family Court became a division of Circuit Court when the Family Court Amendment passed in the 2002 general election. Family Court is devoted exclusively to cases involving families and children and employs full-time judges with the same qualifications as those who serve other divisions of Circuit Court. Circuit judges serve eight-year terms.

District Court

District Court is a court of limited jurisdiction which hears civil cases involving \$4,000 or less, juvenile matters, city and county ordinances, misdemeanors, cases relating to domestic violence and abuse, guardianships for disabled people, traffic offenses, probate of wills and felony preliminary hearings. The Small Claims Division is part of District Court's jurisdiction and informally handles matters with a value of \$1,500 or less. District judges serve four-year terms.

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) in Frankfort is the administrative arm of the Kentucky Court of Justice and supports the activities of more than 3,400 court personnel, including the elected offices of justices, judges and circuit court clerks.

###